



Carnegie Hero Fund Commission

Established April 15, 1904, by Andrew Carnegie, the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission was created to recognize outstanding acts of selfless heroism performed in the United States and Canada.

The single event that stimulated Mr. Carnegie to organize the Fund was the Harwick mine disaster near Pittsburgh in January 1904, which took the lives of 178 men and boys. The victims included an engineer and a miner who went into the stricken mine in a valiant attempt to rescue the others. The tragedy and the sacrifices so moved Mr. Carnegie that he promptly took action on his then-novel idea of honoring and helping "heroes of civilization."

The Commission's Deed of Trust established a \$5 million fund to recognize persons "in peaceful vocations" who act to "preserve or rescue their fellows." Mr. Carnegie specified that each hero to be recognized, or the next of kin, was to receive a medal, reciting the heroic deed it commemorated and carrying the Biblical quotation: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

The Commission was empowered to make monetary awards as well. Grants are given to heroes, or to their widows or other dependents, for continuing support, education, or other worthy purposes.

Rescue acts brought to the Commission's attention are carefully evaluated, and those that appear to have award potential are then investigated and reported to the Commission for decision. To bring an act of heroism to the attention of the Commission, write Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, Oliver Building, Pittsburgh, PA 15222, or call (412) 281-1302.



Requirements for a Carnegie Medal

There must be conclusive evidence that the person performing a heroic act voluntarily risked his or her life in saving or attempting to save the life of another person, or voluntarily sacrificed himself or herself in a heroic manner for the benefit of others.

The act of rescue must be one in which no full measure of responsibility exists between the rescuer and the rescued.

The heroic act must have been performed in the United States, Canada, or the waters thereof and must be brought to the attention of the Commission within two years of the date of the act.

Persons not eligible for awards are: those whose duties in following their regular vocations require them to perform such acts, unless the rescues are clearly beyond the line of duty; members of the armed services; children considered by the Commission to be too young to comprehend the risks involved; and members of the same family, except in cases of outstanding heroism where the rescuer loses his or her life or is severely injured.

Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie was born in Dunfermline, Scotland, on November 25, 1835. When his father's handloom business dwindled in the wake of industrialization, the family emigrated to the United States in 1848, settling in Pittsburgh. Andrew, then 13, took his first job—as a bobbin boy in a cotton factory. Subsequent jobs, ranging from messenger boy with Western Union to division superintendent with the Pennsylvania Railroad, led to the founding, in 1873, of a steel company, which prospered to the extent that it was valued at \$400 million when Mr. Carnegie sold out to I. P. Morgan in 1901.

Thus retiring from business, Mr. Carnegie set about in earnest to distribute his fortune, believing that "the man who dies rich dies disgraced." In addition to his gifts for free public libraries, for which he is best known, Mr.



Carnegie was the benefactor of numerous colleges and schools and of non-profit organizations and associations in his adopted country, in his native land, and in other parts of the world. All told, Mr. Carnegie gave away about \$350 million during his lifetime, but his most significant contribution, both in terms of money and enduring influence, was the establishment of several endowed trusts or institutions, which, bearing his name, continue to unfold the legacy of his generosity.